

Where to go for help/How to help a friend

If you or someone you know is being hurt at home or at school, you are not alone. Sometimes it is hard to know what to say or where to go for help if you have been a victim of dating violence.

Everyone can do something to make a difference about teen dating violence. While getting involved can be intimidating, it is important to speak up. Silence excuses abuse. Have a voice!

Below are some recommendations to keep you safe:

- **Educate yourself!** Learn about teen dating violence and healthy relationships to stay safe! Get involved in school teen outreach programs and help to raise awareness. Ask your school about the Lake County Teen Dating Violence Kit to obtain resources on local programs.
- **Seek help!** Talk to people you trust and keep talking until someone listens. Think about talking to a teacher, parent, coach, relative or friend. Reach out to others for guidance and support. Go to your school counseling department, dean's or nurse's office for more information.
- **Be willing to accept help!** Sometimes people who know you or love you may express concern. Don't be embarrassed or afraid to tell the truth.
- **Create a safety plan!** Decide on a safe location to go and people you can call if you need help. Always let someone know where you are. Create a special code word with your friends so you can signal to each other when you need help. Always have your cell phone with you if you need to call or text a friend for help. Keep change and important numbers with you in the event your cell phone is destroyed or taken. Consider changing your school locker and change your route to/from school.
- **Call 911!** Never underestimate your gut feeling...stay safe! Get help immediately!

Please call the phone numbers or visit the Web sites below for additional information on how to stay safe.

Phone Numbers

National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline 866-331-9474
TTY 866-331-8453
Order of Protection Assistance (D100) 847-360-6471
Lake County Health Department 847-377-8000
A Safe Place 847-249-4450
Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center 847-244-1187
Lake County State's Attorney's Office 847-377-3000

Web sites

www.loveisrespect.com	www.loveisnotabuse.com
www.chooserespect.org	www.asafeplaceforhelp.org
www.breakthecycle.org	www.safeyouth.org
www.seeitandstopit.org	www.zachariascenter.org
www.rainn.org	
www.co.lake.il.us/statesattorney/violence	

Where to go for help/How to help a friend (cont.)

Friends who are experiencing dating violence may change. Your friend may:

- Stop spending time with you or other friends
- Lose self confidence
- Change their style of clothing or makeup
- Quit participating in school activities and begin to get bad grades
- Become secretive and stop sharing things with you
- Abuse alcohol and drugs
- Develop a change in attitude
- Become depressed
- Make excuses or apologize for his/her boyfriend/girlfriend's behavior

If you believe your friend is in a dangerous relationship, talk to someone you trust who can help you reach out. Tell your friend that you are worried. Do not carry the burden yourself!

Below are some recommendations on how to help a friend:

- **Tell your friend you are worried!** Talking about the problem can make a big difference. Be specific about certain incidents you have witnessed and let your friend know how it made you feel. Express your concern for your friend's safety.
- **Be a good listener!** Offer your support and friendship. You are helping your friend to feel heard. Talk in private and most importantly, don't be judgmental.
- **Encourage your friend to seek help!** Provide information on places your friend can seek help. Stress the importance of educating themselves on dating violence and healthy relationships. Refer them to the provided Web sites. Provide your support and have a code word with your friend if you ever need to call for help.
- **Don't turn your back on your friend!** Although it may be difficult to watch, your friend may be scared to leave the relationship. Don't make your friend choose between you and the relationship. Acknowledge the fear and help them to seek help without putting yourself in danger.

Above all, believe your friend and help support them!